THE

Christian Religion.

Expressed I. briefly, in the ancient Creeds, the ten Commandments, and the Lords Prayer.

And II. more largely in a *Profession* taken out of the holy Scriptures; Containing 1. The Articles of the Christian Belief. 2. Our Consent to the Gospel Covenant. 3. The sum of Christian Duty.

According to the Primitive Simplicity, Purity, and Practice: Fitted to the right Instructing of the Ignorant, the promoting of Holiness, and the Charitable Concord of all true Believers.

Which whosoever sincerely Believeth, Consenteth to, and Practiseth, shall certainly be saved.

It is also by prefixed Questions, made a Catechism.

By *Richard Baxter.*

London Printed, 1660.

To fill up this vacant Page.

THE *Papists Confession of the sufficiency of our Belief.*
Concil. Basil. Orat. Raguſ. Bin. p. 299. [*The Holy Scripture in the literall ſenſe, ſoundly and well underſtood, is the Infallible and moſt ſufficient Rule of faith.*]

Bellarm. de verbo Dei, l. 4. c. 11. [*In the Chriſtian doctrine both of Faith and Manners, ſome things are ſimply neceſſary to ſalvation, to all; as the knowledge of the Articles of the Apoſtles Creed, of the ten Commandments, and of ſome Sacraments: The reſt are not ſo Neceſſary, that a man cannot be ſaved without the explicite knowledge, belief and profeſſion of them —— Theſe things that are ſimply neceſſary, and are Profitable to* all, *the Apoſtles preached to all —— All things are written by the Apoſtles which are Neceſſary to* all, *and which they openly preacht to all*] (See the place.)

Coſtenus Enchirid. c. 1. p. 49. Non inficiamur præcipua illa fidei capita quæ omnibus Chriſtianis cognitu ſunt ad ſalutem neceſſaria, perſpicuè ſatis eſſe Apoſtolicis ſcriptis comprehenſa.

The

The Ancient Creed.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; *suffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was Crucified, dead and buried, he descended into Hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints: the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting,* Amen.

I Believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the holy Ghost of the virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end And I believe in the holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one Catholike and Apostolike Church; I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

WHosoever will be saved: before all things, it is necessary that he hold the Catholike faith.

Which faith except every one do keep wholly and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholike faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity:

Neither confounding the persons: nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, is all one: the glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son: & such is the holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal.

As also there be not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated: but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, & the holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.

For like as we be compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord.

So are we forbidden by the Catholike Religion, to say there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none: neither Created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.

The holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one holy Ghoſt, not three holy Ghoſts.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or leſs then another.

But the whole three perſons be coeternal together, and coequal.

So that in all things, as is aforeſaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worſhipped.

He therefore that will be ſaved: muſt thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is neceſſary to everlaſting ſalvation; that he alſo believe rightly in the incarnation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

For the right faith is, that we believe and confeſs: that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, is God and man.

God of the ſubſtance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and man of the ſubſtance of his mother, born in the world.

Perfect God and perfect man: of a reaſonable ſoul, and humane fleſh ſubſiſting.

Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead: and inferiour to the Father touching his manhood.

Who although he be God and man: yet he is not two, but one Chriſt.

One, not by Converſion of the Godhead into fleſh, but by taking of the manhood into God.

One altogether, not by confuſion of ſubſtance, but by unity of perſon.

For as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man: ſo God and man is one Chriſt.

Who ſuffered for our ſalvation, deſcended into hell, roſe again the third day from the dead.

He aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth on the right hand of the Father, God almighty; from whence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whoſe coming all men ſhall riſe again with their bodies: and ſhall give account for their own works.

And they that have done good, ſhall go into life everlaſting: and they that have done evil, into everlaſting fire.

This is the Catholike faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be ſaved.

The ten Commandments, *Exod.* 20.

GOD spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattel, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Seventh day and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.

The Lords Prayer, *Mat.* 6.

OUR Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever, Amen.

The

The PROFESSION of the CHRISTIAN Religion.

I. *The Articles of the Christian Belief.*

It is a Catechism if you prefix to every Article, the Question, What do you believe?

1. Of GOD. 1. THere is one only God (a) in three persons, *the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (b): Who is Infinite in Being, Power, Wisdom and Goodness (c): The Creator of all things (d), Our most absolute Lord, most Righteous Governour, and most gracious Father (e).

(*) Or subsistencies.

(a) 1 Cor. 8. 4. 6. (b) Mat. 28. 19. 1 Joh. 5. 7. (c) 1 Tim. 1. 17. Psal. 139. 7, 8, 9. & 147. 5. Isa. 40. 17. (d) Neh. 9. 6. (e) Rev. 4. 8. & 15. 3. Ex. 34. 6, 7. Ezek. 18. 4. Psal. 47. 7. & 119. 68. & 145. 9.

2. Of the Creation of man, and the first Law. 2. God made man for himself (f) in his own image (g); with Reason and freewill (h): endued with wisdom and holiness (i); and put under him the inferior creatures, for his use (k): and

(f) Prov. 16. 4. (g) Gen. 1. 26. (h) Deut. 30. 19 (i) Col. 3. 10. Eccles. 7. 29. (k) Psal. 8. 5, 6.

bound him by the Law of Nature to adhere to God his Maker; to Believe him, fear him, love him, honour him and obey him with all his powers (l): Moreover forbidding him to eat of the tree of Knowledge upon pain of death (m).

(l) Mat. 22. 30. 33. Deut. 6. 5. & 10. 12. & 1:32. (m) Gen. 2. 16, 17. Rom. 6 23.

3. Of mans fall, and of original sin, and our common misery.

3. Man being tempted by Satan, did wilfully sin, and so fell from God and Happiness, under the wrath of God (a), the curse of his Law (b) and the power of the Devil (c): And hence we are all conceived in sin, and prone to evil, (d) and condemnation is passed upon all (e); and no meer creature is able to deliver us (f).

(a) Gen. 3. John 8. 44. Rom. 5. 12, 18 Gen. 3. 16, 17. (b) Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. & 6. 23. (c) Acts 26. 18. Eph. 2. 2. Heb. 2. 14. (d) Psal. 51. 5 Rom 5. 12 Eph. 2, 3, 5 Isa 48. 4. Job 14. 4. & 25. 4. Gen. 6. 5 Hos. 11. 7. (e) Rom. 5. 18, 19. (f) Rom. 5. 6, 10. Acts 4. 12.

4. Of our Redemption by Jesus Christ.

4. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to be their Redeemer (a); who being God, and One with the Father (b) did take our nature, and become man; being conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin *Mary*, and born of her, and called Jesus Christ (c); and being free from sin, he conquered the tempter, fulfilled all righteousness (d), revealed the Gospel, and confirmed

(a) Joh 3. 16, 17 & 4. 42 1 Joh 2. 2. (b) Joh. 1. Rom 9. 5 Joh. 10 30 (c) 1 Tim. 2 5. Heb. 2. 14, 16. Luke 1. 27, 31, 35. Mat. 1. 20, 21. (d) Heb. 4. 15. Mat. 4. Heb. 7. 26. Mat. 3. 15.

confirmed it by Miracles (e); and gave himself a sacrifice for our sins, and a ransome for us, in suffering death on the cross, to reconcile us unto God (f); and was buried, and went among the dead (g)* and Rose again the third day, having conquered death, (h); and afterward ascended into Heaven (i) where he remaineth God and Man, in one person (k), and is Lord of all, in glory with the Father (l); the chief Priest, and Prophet, and King of his Church (m); interceding for us; and teaching and ruling us, by his Spirit, Ministers, and Word (n).

*Or [*to the departed souls*; Or [*to the other world.*]

(e) Acts 2. 22. Heb. 2. 3, 4.
(f) Heb. 9. 26. & 10. 12. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Ep. 2. 16.
(g) 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. Luk. 23. 43. Psal. 16. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 18, 19.
(h) 2 Tim. 1. 10. Heb. 2. 14. Acts 2. 24.
(i) Acts 2. 33. & 10. 36.
(k) Acts 3. 21. Rom. 9. 5. Heb. 7. 24.
(l) Acts 2. 36. & 10. 36.
(m) Heb. 8. 2. & 10. 21. Acts 3. 23. & 5. 31.
(n) Heb. 7. 25. Rom. 8. 34. Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. Rom. 8. 9. 1 Thes. 5. 12.

5. Of the New Testament or Covenant of Grace.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ hath ordained in his Testament, that all they that receive him by a true effectual faith, and by true Repentance do turn from the flesh, the world, and the Devil unto God, shall freely receive the pardon of their sins (a), and shall become the Sons of God, and heirs of everlasting Life, (b) & the Spirit of Christ shall dwell within them (c):

(a) Heb. 9. 15. Joh. 1. 12. & 3. 16. Acts 16. 18. Gal. 6. Acts 18 & 3. 19. & 2. Rom. 8. 1, 13. Mar. 4.
(b) Rom. 16, 17.
(c) Gal. 4. 6. John 3. 6. 1 Cor. 6. 17. Rom. 8. Eph. 2. 18.

and

and all that overcome and persevere to the death, shall live with Christ in endless glory (d): But the Unbelievers, impenitent and unholy shall be condemned to everlasting fire (e). And this he hath commanded his Ministers to preach to all the world (f): And hath told us, that All that are given him of the Father, shall come to him, and that he will in no wise cast them out, nor shall any pluck them out of his hands. (g)

(d) Rev. 2. & 3. Col. 1. 22, 23. Heb. 4. 1. (e) Mat. 16. 16. Joh. 3. 35, 36. Heb. 12. 14. 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. & 2. 12. Luke 13. 3. (f) Mat. 28. 19. Mar. 16. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 5. 19. (g) Joh. 6. 37 & 10. 28, 29.

6. Of the Holy Ghost revealing and confirming the Gospel.

6. The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, did inspire and guide the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, that they might truly and fully reveal the doctrine of Christ, and deliver it in Scripture to the Church as the rule of our faith and life (a): and by abundance of Evident uncontrouled Miracles, and wonderfull gifts, to be the great witness of Christ, and of the truth of his holy word (b).

(a) Joh. 14. 16. & 15. 26. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11, 12. 2 Pet. 1. 21. 2 Tim. 3. 16. Joh. 16. 13. Eph. 3. 5. & 2. 20. Isa. 8. 20. Rev. 22. 18, 19. 1 Tim. 6. 14. Luke 16. 29, 31. (b) Acts 2. 22. 4. & 5. 32. & 19. 11, 19. Heb. 2. 3, 4. Gal. 3. 1, 3. Joh. 14. 12. & 3. 2. 1 Cor. 14.

7. Where

7. Of our Sanctification by the Holy Ghost, and the state and blessings of the sanctified.

7. Where the Gospel is made known, the Holy Ghost by it doth enlighten the minds of all that shall be saved, and opening and softening their hearts, doth draw them to believe in Christ (a) and turneth them from the power of Satan unto God (b): Whereupon they are joyned to Christ the Head, and into one holy Catholick Church which is his Body, consisting of all true believers (c): and are freely Justified, and made the Sons of God (d); and a sanctified peculiar people unto him (e), and do Love him above all, and serve him sincerely in holiness and righteousness (f), Loving and desiring the Communion of the Saints (g); Overcoming the Flesh, the World and the Devil (h), and Hoping for Christs second coming, and for everlasting life (i).

(a) Acts 26. 17, 18. Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11. Acts 16. 14. Joh. 6. 44. Eze. 36. 26. Gal. 5. 22. (b) Act. 26. 18. (c) Col. 2. 19. Eph. 5. 30, 31, 32. & 3. 17. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, 27. (d) Rom. 3. 24. & 4. 24. John 1. 12. (e) Tit. 2. 14. (f) Rom. 5. 5. Mat. 10. 37. 1 Cor. 6. 11

Luke 1. 75. (g) 1 John 3. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 22. Acts 24. 2. (h) Gal. 5. 17, 24. 1 John 2. 15. (i) 1 Cor. 1. 7. 2 Pet. 3. 11, 12. Tit. 1. 2. & 3. 7.

8. Of the Judgement and Execution.

8. At Death the souls of the Justified go to happiness with Christ, and the souls of the wicked to Misery (a): And at the end of this world the Lord Jesus Christ will come again;

(a) Luke 23. 43. & 16. 22. 2 Cor. 5. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 23. 1 Pet. 3. 19. Luke 16. 26, 28.

again, and will raiſe the bodies of all men from the dead; and will judge all according to their works (b) And the Righteous ſhall go into everlaſting life, and the reſt into everlaſting puniſhment (c): *All this I do unfeignedly believe.*

(b) Acts 1. 11. 1 Cor. 15. Joh. 5. 22, 29. Mat. 25. 2 Cor. 5. 10.

(c) Mat. 25. & 13. 41, 42, 43. 2 Tim. 4. 8, 18. 2 Theſ. 1 8, 9, 10. & 2 12. John 17. 24.

II. *Our Conſent to the Goſpel Covenant, with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, by which we are Chriſtians, and members of the Catholick Church.*

Queſt. *Are you willing and reſolved to Give up your ſelf to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, according to the Goſpel doctrine which you profeſs?*

REpenting of my ſins, and renouncing the Fleſh, the World and the Devil (a), I do take this one God to be my only God (b), and do heartily give up my ſelf unto him (c); *Even to the Father*, (d) as my *Creator* and *Reconciled Father in Chriſt*: And *to his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, as *my Lord*, and *only Saviour*, to Reconcile, and bring me unto God (e): And *to the Holy Ghoſt* as *my*

(a) Luke 15. 21. Act. 2. 37. & 3. 19 Rom 8. 13. Luke 14. 33. 1 Theſ. 1 9.

(b) Exod. 20. 3. Deut. 26 17. Joſ. 24. 16. to 26.

(c) 2 Cor. 8. 5. (d) John 17. 3. 1 Cor. 8. 6. 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. 1 John 1. 3. Eph. 4, 5, 6. (e) John 14. 6. Luke 5. 14. & 14. 26. Acts 9 6. Rom. 6. 13, 16. Luke 19. 27. John 3. 19.

Sanctifier;

Sanctifier; that he may further illuminate, sanctifie and confirm me, and I may hold fast and obey the doctrine of Christ, which was revealed by his inspiration, and witnessed by his gifts and Miracles, and is now contained in the Holy Scriptures; and that he may be in me the earnest of my everlasting Happiness with God (f).

(f) Mat. 28.29. Eph. 2.18, 22. & 1. 13, 14, 18. Rom. 8. 9, 13, 16, 26. 1 Cor. 2. 10. Eph. 2. 18. 22. & 3. 5, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 22. & 5. 5. Isa. 44. 3, 4, 5. Rom. 15. 6.

III. *The summ of Christian Duty.*

Quest. *What are*

1. *The publike means, and duties of Holiness.*

1. CHrist hath appointed that fit men shall be Ordained his Ministers, to preach the Gospel to the Nations of the world (a), and make them his Disciples, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (b): and to congregate his Disciples (c), and to oversee and Guide the several Congregations, and each member thereof (d): Particularly, to Teach them the word of God (e); to Pray and Praise God with them and for them (f):

(a) Mat. 28. 19, 20. (b) Rom. 10. 7, 14. Act. 14. 23. 2 Tim. 2. 2. Acts 13. 2. & 2. 41. (c) Acts 2. 42. & 6. 2. (d) Act. 20. 7, 28. 1. Tim. 5. 17. Tit. 1. 5.

(e) Acts 20. 20, 31. Col. 1. 28. Eph 4. 11, 12, 13. Mal. 2. 7. 1 Tim. 5. 17. (f) 1 Cor. 14. 16, 26. Acts 20. 7, 36. James 5. 14. Acts 6. 4. & 2. 42. Phil. 1. 4. Neh. 12. 24. & 11. 17. & 9. 5. & 8. 4, 6.

to

to administer the Lords Supper in remembrance of him (g); (h) Especially on the Lords Day, which he hath appointed for holy communion in such works (i): Also to Rebuke with authority the scandalous and unruly (k); and to bind and reject those that are obstinately impenitent, and unreformed; and to Absolve and Restore the Penitent, and confirm the weak (l).

(g) 1 Cor. 11. 24. & 10.16.
(h) Heb. 7. 7. Numb. 6. 23.
(i) Rev. 1. 10. Acts 20. 7. 1 Cor. 16. 2.
(k) Tit. 2. 15. & 1. 9, 11. 1 Tim. 5. 19. & 3. 5.
(l) Mat. 18. 17, 18. Tit. 3. 10. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 11, 13.

It is therefore the Peoples Duty to joyn with such Churches, for the aforesaid Worship of God (a); and to know, hear, submit to, and obey these their Guides that are over them in the Lord; (b) and to avoid Division and Discord, and to live in Unity, Love and Peace (c).

(a) Acts 2. 42.
(b) 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 7. 17. 24. 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 16. 16.
(c) 1 Cor. 1. 10. & 3. 3. Rom. 16. 17. Eph. 4. 3, 15, 16. Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. Rom. 15. 6.

2. *The secret Duties of Holiness.*

2. The *secret* Duties of *Holiness* are these: The exercise of Faith, Repentance, Love, Hope, Delight in God, and all other graces (a): The mortifying of our sins, especially Atheism, Unbelief, and unholiness; hardness of heart, disobedience and unthankfulness,

(a) Jude 21. Gal. 5. 22. Luke 10. 17. 1 Tim. 4. 7. Isa. 64. 7.

thankfulneſs, fleſh-pleaſing, covetouſneſs, and Pride, (b): The diligent Examining of our own hearts, about our Eſtates, our Duties, and our ſins (c): Meditating upon God, and his word and works; eſpecially of our Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; and of Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell (d); Watching diligently over our Thoughts, Affections, Words and Actions (e): Reſiſting Temptations (f): And frequent and fervent Prayer to God, in the name of Chriſt, with Confeſſion, Thankſgiving, and cheerful Praiſes (g);

(b) Acts 24.16. Col. 3. 5. Rom. 8. 13. Heb. 3. 12, 13. Mat. 15. 18, 19. Luke 12. 15. Rom. 13. 13, 14. 1 Cor. 3. 18.

(c) 2 Pet. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 13. 5. Gal. 6. 3, 4. Pſal. 4. 4. (d) Pſal. 104. 34. & 1. 2. & 119. 97, 99. Gen. 24. 63. Eph. 3. 18, 19. Pſal. 90. 12. Luke 12. 36. 2 Pet. 11, 12. (e) Luke 21. 36. Pſal. 141 3. 1 Cor. 10. 12. Pſal. 39. 1. Prov. 4. 23. (f) Eph. 6. 10. to 19. 1 Pet. 5. 9. Jam. 4. 7. (g) Pſal. 34. 1. & 145. 2. 1 Theſ. 5. 17. Phil. 4. 6. John 16. 23.

3. *The Private Duties of Holineſs in our Relations to others.*

3. Parents and Maſters muſt diligently teach their children and ſervants, the word and fear of God (a), and Pray with them, and for them, and hinder them from ſin (b), and uſe all their power that they and their houſeholds may ſerve the Lord (c): children and ſervants muſt willingly learn and obey (d): We muſt ſeek inſtruction in the matters of

(a) Eph. 6. 4, 9. Deut. 6. 11, 12. (b) Dan. 6. 10. Act. 10. 30. Prov. 22. 6, 15. & 23. 13. Pſal. 101. 1 Sam. 2. 23, 29.

(c) Gen. 18. 19. Joſh. 24. 15. (d) Col. 3. 20. 22. Eph. 6. Deut. 21. 18.

our

(e) Act. 16. 30 Mal. 2. 7. 1 Cor. 14. 35. (f) Pſal. 1. 1. & 15. 4. & 119. 63. Prov. 13. 20. Eph. 5. 6, 7, 11. Lev. 19 17. Mat. 18. 15. Heb. 3. 13. Jam. 5. 20. 1 Pet. 5. 5. (g) Jam. 5. 16. (h) Col. 3. 16, 17. Acts 12. 12. & 16. 25. Eph. 4. 29. 1 Pet. 4. 11. & 3. 2. Jam. 3. 13. Col. 1. 3. & 4. 3. Heb. 10. 24.

our ſalvation, eſpecially of our Teachers (e): we muſt take heed of the company of tempting, and ungodly perſons; and delight in the company and help of the Godly: We muſt lovingly and faithfully give, and thankfully receive admonitions and exhortations (f): Confeſſing our faults one to another (g): and by Prayer, Pſalms, and edifying conference, and a holy converſation, provoking one another to Love, and to good works (h).

4. The Duties of Juſtice and Charity towards men.

(a) Deut. 1. 17. 2 Chron. 19. 6, 7. Joſh. 1. 8. Iſa. 56. 1. (b) Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3. 1 Pet. 2. 13. Eph. 6. 1, 5. (c) Exod. 20. Mat. 5. 17. to 48. (d) Deut. 5. 21. Phil. 2. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 10. 24, 33. & 13. 5. (e) Mat. 7. 12. (f) Col. 3. 13. (g) Mat. 19. 19. & 22. 39. (h) Mat. 5. 44. Gal. 6. 10. Heb. 13. 16.

4. Superiors muſt rule for God and the common good, with Juſtice and Mercy (a): Inferiors muſt honour and obey them in the Lord (b): We muſt not injure, but preſerve the Life, Chaſtity, Eſtate, Name, and Rights of our Neighbour (c): Not ſeeking our *Own* againſt his welfare (d), but doing as we would be done by (e); forbearing and forgiving (f); and loving our neighbour as our ſelves (g): Yea loving our enemies; and doing good to all according to our power (h).

The Agreement of the Aſſociated PASTORS.

I. WE do each one for himſelf, profeſs our Reſolution, in the ſtrength of Chriſt, to be faithful and diligent in the works of our Miniſtry; and to live an holy and exemplary life, in Piety, Juſtice and Charity, according to the meaſure of our abilities: Eſpecially watching againſt thoſe ſins that tend to the corrupting or dividing of the Church, and to the hindring of our Miniſtry; and to the diſhonour of the Goſpel, and of our holy profeſſion.

2 Chron. 15. 12,13,14,15. Act. 20. 28. 1 Tim. 4. 12, 13,14,15,16. and 3. 1, &c. and 5. 17, 21. 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.

Art. 1. *For an holy exemplary life.*

II. We do profeſs our Agreement and Reſolution in the ſtrength of Chriſt, to be faithful and diligent in publick Preaching the Goſpel: And in the perſonal inſtructing of all in our Pariſhes, or undertaken limits, that will ſubmit thereto; teaching the Ignorant the Principles of Religion;

Art. 2. *For teaching all that will ſubmit.*

endeavouring in Love, Compaſſion and Meekneſs, and yet with ſerioufneſs and zeal, to convince the erroneous and oppoſers, to awaken the preſumptuous and ſecure, and help them to try the ſtate of their ſouls, and to ſee and feel their ſin and miſery, and return to God by Chriſt that they may live: to ſtrengthen the weak; to raiſe the faln; to edifie and confirm the ſtrong; and to comfort ſuch as need conſolation; and to help them all to prepare for death and judgement, and for everlaſting life: And all this, as frequently, conſtantly and orderly, as our ſtrength, and time, and greater duties will permit.

Art. 3. For a perſonal profeſſion of Chriſtianity to be made by all that will be taken for adult members, and partake of their Communion.

III. That the Churches may be capable of the Diſcipline of Chriſt, and conſtituted and ruled according to the Word of God, and the ends of our Office and Labours may be attained, we are Agreed and Reſolved to take none for *Adult members of the Churches committed to our ſpecial charge*, nor admit them, *as ſuch*, to Church-Communion and Priviledges, but thoſe that have firſt made ſome perſonal credible Profeſſion of true Chriſtianity, that is, of Faith and Obedience, and as members of thoſe Churches, ſubmit to our Paſtoral over-ſight according to the Word of God. But all that make this

this Profession of Christianity and Consent to live in Communion with the Church, and under the Ministry and Discipline of Christ, we shall receive, though they be weak in knowledge, and utterance, and duties; and shall faithfully imploy our Ministerial abilities and care for their edification and salvation.

IV. We are Agreed and Resolved in the strength of Christ, while we have ability and opportunity, to Congregate the people, and hold constant Assemblies, especially on the Lords-Dayes; and therein faithfully to perform the works of our office, in Reading the holy Scripture, Preaching, Praying, Baptizing, Praising God, celebrating the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and guiding the people in the whole publick worship of God: And to manage our work with as much prudence, and reverence, and love, and compassion to the peoples souls, and with as much plainness and convincing evidence, authority, seriousness, and zealous importunity as we can: Avoiding as far as we are able, such things as corrupt and dishonour Gods Ordinances, and tend to corrupt the peoples minds with errour, presumption, deadness, negligence, or other distempers, displeasing to the Lord. Art. 4. For publick worship.

Art. 5. *For Diſcipline.* V. For the ends of our Office, in obedience to the Lord, we Agree and Reſolve in the ſtrength of Chriſt, to exerciſe ſo much of Church-Government and Diſcipline, in the Churches committed to our charge, as we diſcern to be our certain duty; that is, to keep order and decency in the holy Aſſemblies, and ſee that all be done to edification: Convicting ſeducers, and ſtopping the mouthes of perverſe gain-ſayers; Overſeeing the ſeveral members of our charge; and requiring them to walk obediently to Chriſt, and do their duties towards each other: to Reprove the groſs and ſcandalous offenders: and if they continue impenitent or unreformed, to tell the Church, or rebuke them before all; (and publickly pray for their recovery): And if they hear not the Church, but remain impenitent and unreformed, after ſufficient reproof and patience, to put away ſuch perſons from among us, declaring againſt them the threatnings of the Lord, and requiring them to forbear Communion with the Church, and requiring the Church to avoid them, and have no familiarity or communion with them, as perſons unmeet for the communion of Saints. And thoſe that credibly profeſs Repentance, we are to

Abſolve

Abſolve Miniſterially in the name of Chriſt, and comfort with the promiſes of Grace; receiving them, and requiring the people to receive them, as Brethren, into their Communion: but warning them to watch and ſin ſo no more, leſt worſe befall them. This holy Diſcipline, by the help of God, we ſhall exerciſe faithfully and impartially; but yet with caution and moderation; neglecting no neceſſary conſultations with other Paſtors, or concurrence of the Church: and conſenting to be reſponſible for male-adminiſtrations.

VI. For the Communion of Churches, and the ſtrengthening our ſelves for the work of God, and helping one another therein, and maintaining Unity, Love and Concord; We do Conſent to hold a Brotherly communion and correſpondency: And to that end, when neceſſity or greater duty hindreth us not, we ſhall meet at ſuch convenient times and places, as ſhall be appointed or agreed on from time to time; and ſhall labour to improve theſe meetings to our mutual edification, in ſuch conſultations, conferences or other holy exerciſes, as our preſent caſe ſhall moſt require. And we conſent to deal faithfully in adviſing and admoniſhing one another; and for the ſatiſ-

Art. 6. *For Communion of Churches by Aſſociations.*

faction of the Brethren (to the fore-mentioned ends) to be reſponſible, if any ſhall charge us with Hereſie, ſcandal, ſchiſm, or male-adminiſtration: And forbearing matters without our line, to ſtudy and endeavour the promoting of Truth, and Holineſs, and Unity among our ſelves, and with other Churches, as we have a call.

And alſo we agree by communicatory Letters upon all needful occaſions, to certifie our Brethren and other Churches of the ſtate of our affairs, and of particular members, that thoſe that juſtly have communion in one Church, or are excluded, may have communion with other Churches, or be refuſed by them accordingly, when there is juſt occaſion.

And if any Brethren or Churches be prevailed over ſo far by temptation, as unjuſtly to deny us their communion, in this way of Aſſociation, Aſſemblies, or Correſpondency, we ſhall not therefore deny them to be our Brethren, or Churches of Chriſt, but ſhall Love and Own them, and have ſo much Communion with them, as their diſtance ſhall leave them capable of, if they joyn with us in the Profeſſion and Practice of true Chriſtianity, and of the points that are neceſſary to Church-conſtitution and communion,

munion, and are not proved guilty of hereſie, ungodlineſs, or ſuch kind of ſchiſm or ſcandalous ſins, for which the Scripture commandeth us to reject men, and avoid them. But ſuch as are thus guilty (though they offer themſelves to aſſociate with us) we ſhall refuſe to hold communion with, till they credibly profeſs Repentance, and manifeſt a Reformation.

VII. Becauſe it is a matter of great concernment to the honour of Chriſt, the propagation of the Goſpel, and the encreaſe and welfare of the Church, that there be a Proviſion of able, faithful Miniſters, and that unworthy perſons be kept out; and becauſe deceivers and unworthy men are forward to intrude, and the people ordinarily are inſufficient of themſelves to make ſuch tryal of mens ability and ſoundneſs as is requiſite to the ſafety of the Church; and the Church in all ages hath received Miniſters by the Ordination of other Miniſters of Chriſt: We do therefore Agree to be careful and faithful in the diſcharge of our duties hereabout, ſo far as we can diſcern them, Reſolving that if any vacant Church deſire us to recommend a fit perſon to be their Paſtor, or to Judge of any recommended to them, we will not recommend

Art. 7. *Of Ordination and Approbation of Miniſters.*

or approve of any, but such as we judge most agreeable to the will of Christ; nor will we prefer less fit and worthy men, for friendship or any carnal interest or respect. And if any intollerably unworthy person be about to intrude, or have intruded, or any neighbour Church be about to choose, or have chosen such, if we have opportunity, we shall faithfully acquaint them with their sin and danger, and perswade them to a better course. And if we shall be called to invest any by solemn Ordination in the sacred office of the Ministry, we shall perform it, as near as we are able, according to the directions of the Word of God; admitting none that Christ excludeth: And if it may be, we shall do it in that Congregation which the person is to Over-see, that so we may the better discern their mutual Consent, inculcate their duties, and engage them to a faithful performance thereof.

And whereas it is much controverted of late, Whether the Power of Ordination be given to the people, or the Pastors of a particular Church, or the Associated neighbour Pastors, and whether a stated President among these should not have a negative voice herein; We are Agreed, that leaving the people their due Liberty of Consent in

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the reception of their proper Pastors, We will none of us singly Ordain, without the assistance of other Pastors: Nor will we joyn with any Hereticks or others, in unjust and impious Ordinations, that tend to the corrupting or dividing of the Churches.

And to avoid Division upon a tolerable difference of Opinions, where we may agree in Practice, we Consent that the Associations that have no stated Presidents, or that give not to such a Negative voice, shall receive into their Communion those that are of the contrary opinion; giving them leave, if they desire it, to profess or record their opinion in that particular, so they will afterward walk among them in Love and Peace. And that the Associations that choose a stated President, and give him a Negative voice in Ordination, shall in like manner, and on like terms, receive into their Communion, such as dissent in that particular, and having professed or recorded their dissent, will walk submissively in Love and Peace. Which liberty also of professing and recording their different principles, we desire may be allowed them, that joyn in Synods, as being only for Communion of Churches, and them that joyn in them, as having a direct superiour Governing

ing Power over the particular Paſtors of the Churches.

Art. 8. *Of Obedience to Magiſtrates.*

VIII. Though it be the ſureſt way to Peace and Concord, to take up with theſe neceſſary things, and we cannot approve of the narrow dividing Principles of thoſe men that will impoſe things unneceſſary, to the excluding of the neceſſary; yet if our lawful Rulers ſhall command it, or the peace of the Church, through the diſtempers of the Brethren ſhall require it, we ſhall obey, and conſent in things that God hath not forbidden; and if we ſuffer for well-doing, and for obeying God rather then men, we ſhall endeavour to imitate our Lord, who being reviled, reviled not again, and when he ſuffered, threatned not; but committed all to him that judgeth righteouſly, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23.

The

The Office of Christs Ministers more largely opened.

1. THE Lord Jesus Christ having purchased our Salvation by his blood, and stablished his Testament or Covenant of Grace, and left us his example of perfect holiness, ascended to the Father, and is there the Glorified Lord of all, and Head over all things to his Church, all power being given him in Heaven and Earth; that interceding for us with the Father, he might be the Treasury of our Light and Life; and offering salvation to the miserable world, might gather, and cleanse, and save the Church, which is his Body; Communicating to them that grace that is here necessary to them, in their way and warfare, and perfecting them in Glory with himself, when their warfare is accomplished.

2. Christ Being thus invisible to us, in Glory with the Father, performeth not these works below, by himself in person, immediately and alone; but by his Spirit, Ministers, and Word. The Holy Ghost being his Advocate or Agent to these ends; and his Ministers the Instruments used by his Spirit

Spirit and himself: to indite and bear witness to his word, and to Preach it to the world, as that infallible Truth which must guide them to Salvation.

3. The first Prophetical and Apostolical Ministers, being sent by himself, and qualified by the inspiration, conduct and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, did found the Church, and enlarge it unto many nations of the world, and left them the holy Scriptures, which contain the doctrine which they preached, that it might be certainly and fully preserved, and propagated till the coming of Christ. And they setled by the appointment of Christ and his Spirit, an ordinary ministry to succeed them, not to deliver a new Law or Gospel, but to preserve and preach the doctrine which in the holy Scriptures (and conjunctly at first also from the mouths of the Apostles) they had received as once delivered to the Saints, and to guide the Churches by it to the end.

4. Though Christ appointed Ministers that should have so far a charge or care of the whole Church, as not to be limited to any one part, but to extend their labour and oversight, as far as their capacity and opportunities would permit: yet did he never make

make any man his Vicar or Vicegerent, as Head of the universal Church: nor lay upon any one, whether *Peter*, *Paul*, or any other, the charge and oversight of the whole: nor did ever *Peter* or any one Apostle exercise such an Office, in governing all the Catholike Church: especially when it ceased to be confined to *Jerusalem* and the adjacent parts, and was dispersed through the world. Never did the Apostles receive their Commissions from *Peter*: or all the Ministers then in the world, perform their work by his Commission, or by any power received from him; nor were accountable to him, and judged by him for what they did. Much less is this universal Head-ship, committed to the Pope of *Rome* through all (or any) generations: But because a certain Primacy of Order was granted him by Emperours and Councils, within the limits of the Roman Empire, long after the Apostles days: therefore doth he take advantage thence, to pretend a Title to the universal Head-ship: As if the Roman and the Christian world had been the same; or the Emperor and his Clergy had been the Rulers of all the Christian subjects of all other Princes or Pastors upon earth: and his limited Primacy had been an universal Soveraignty.

Soveraignty. This claim of the Pope of *Rome* to be the Vice-Christ, or universal Pastor of all the Christian world, is a tyrannical, impious, irrational usurpation; contrary to the holy Scripture, and the state of the Primitive Church, and contrary to nature and common sense, which declare his incapacity of the work; far more then any Prince is uncapable of being the universal Monarch of the world; And therefore all Christians should abhor this proud and impious usurpation, and fly from the guilt of that horrible schism, and those corruptions in doctrine, worship and government, which it hath introduced.

5. Christ calleth his ordinary ministers to that office, by enduing them with his gifts, and disposing them thereunto, and moving the hearts of the people to consent, and by ordination of the senior Pastors; and giving them opportunities for the work: and sometime the Magistrates command hath a hand in the obligation.

6. It belongeth to the Office of the Ministers of Christ to Preach the Gospel to the nations of the world, and make them Christs Disciples, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

7. This

7. This Preaching or publiſhing the Goſpel, is done by voice or by writing: that by voice, is done by Reading, by publike Sermons, or interlocutory conference: that by writing is either by tranſlating the holy Scriptures into the languages uſed by the Nations, or by expounding and applying them. So that the holy Scriptures in the *original languages*, are the word of God, both as to the *terms and ſenſe Grammatical* and *Doctrinal*: The ſame Scriptures in a *Tranſlation* are the word of God as to the *ſenſe*, both *Grammatical and Doctrinal*; but not as to the Terms: The holy doctrine of the Scriptures delivered in the *writings*, and *Sermons*, and *conferences* of the *Preachers* of the Goſpel, is the word of God, as to the *Doctrinal ſenſe*; but not as to the *terms* or *Grammatical ſenſe*, except when they recite the Scripture words, as in the original or tranſlated.

8. Baptiſm is a holy Sacrament inſtituted by Chriſt, in which a perſon profeſſing the Chriſtian faith (or the Infant of ſuch a Profeſſor) is (regularly by a miniſter of Chriſt) baptized in water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, in ſignification and ſolemnization of the holy Covenant, in which as a Penitent Believer

(or

(or the seed of such) he giveth up himself (or is by the Parent given up) to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, from henceforth (or from the time of natural capacity) to Believe in, Love, and serve this blessed Trinity, against the Flesh, the World, and Devil, and this especially on the account of Redemption: and (if he sincerely make this Covenant) is solemnly entred a member of Christ and his Church, a justified reconciled Child of God, and an heir of Heaven: all which, with the other present benefits of the Covenant, he is hereby instated (or invested) in; they being thus solemnly delivered to him by the Promise thus sealed, and applyed by an appointed Minister of Christ.

Or if some of us doubt whether these special benefits of the Covenant are delivered thus to all the Infants that are sincerely dedicated unto God; yet we are all agreed, that they are assured to them as soon as they believe: and in the interim of their incapacity, they have a general promise that God will be their God, and his mercy shall be to them.

9. It is a notable part of the ministerial Office to Baptize: and consequently to try and judge of their Profession who are thus solemnly

solemnly to be admitted into the Church, and estated by Baptism in these benefits: Therefore hath Christ given the Keys of his Kingdom to their trust, both that his holy Church may be preserved from the unjust intrusions of uncapable persons: and that the faithful Covenanters may have the fuller consolation, by receiving a sealed promise and pardon, from the hand of a minister of Christ, commanded by him to seal and deliver it in his name.

10. We are perswaded that it is the Will of Christ that the Infants of the faithful shall be dedicated to him in Baptism, and engaged in his Covenant, and made members of his visible Church, because we find that under the promise before Christs Incarnation it was their duty to devote and engage their Children to God in the holy Covenant, and that God did accept them as visible members of his Church; And we never find where Christ had discharged Parents from this duty, or turned all Infants out of his Church, and reversed this blessing of their Church-membership; but contrarily we find him offering to have taken the Jewish Nation to be still his Church, if they would have taken him for their Saviour; and telling us that it was for Unbelief,

that they were broken off; and that it is but some of the branches that were broken off, and we are graffed in amongst them into the same Olive-tree, and that all Israel shall be saved, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in; And we find Christ rebuking his Disciples for hindering little Children from being offered to him, and that he charged them to forbid it no more, and that he received and blessed them himself, and tels us that of such is the Kingdom of God; and we find it the Commission given to his Ministers, that they were to Disciple the Nations, Baptizing them. All which, and much more (especially having not the least intimation of his Will against that which was even then the Duty and Practice of the Parents, and the Infants benefit) do deter us from forbidding the dedication of Children unto Christ, and receiving them into his Church by Baptism.

11. Baptism being so great a work, should be deliberately, seriously and reverently performed, if it may be, publikely before the Church, where the person (or Parent) should make their solemn profession, and be received with the joy and prayers of the Church; whether Infant or Adult.

12. The

12. The Catholick Church conſiſteth of all the Chriſtians in the world: Thoſe that have the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt are the living members: Thoſe that openly profeſs Chriſtianity, and enter into Covenant with Chriſt, and are not yet Baptized, are viſible members initially, but the ſolemnization and inveſtiture is defective; If it be where Baptiſm cannot be had, the defect is innocent; If where it may be had, it is ſinful: but yet not ſuch as nullifieth the perſons viſible Chriſtianity. And no errours, offences or differences do exclude any totally from the Catholick Church, while all the eſſentials of Chriſtianity are kept.

13. It is the will of Chriſt that all Chriſtians that have opportunity, be members of ſome particular Church, as well as of the univerſal: that he may have the honour, and they the great and neceſſary benefits, that by the Miniſtry, Ordinances and Communion of Saints, is there to be expected.

14. A particular Chriſtian Church, is [A competent number of Chriſtians cohabiting, who by the appointment of Chriſt, and their own expreſſed Conſent, are united (or aſſociated) under one or more

Pastors, for the right worshipping of God in publike, and the Edification of the members, in Knowledge and Holiness, and the maintaining of their obedience to Christ, for the safety, strength and beauty of the society, and thereby the Glorifying and pleasing of the Lord.] It is a Political organized society, that is here defined, and not a meer Community that is incapable of the Sacraments and other Ordinances, and the benefits of them, for want of Overseers.

15. Those Ministers that are placed in Parishes, where are many sorts of people, some Ignorant of the essentials of Christianity, some Apostates, some impious and of wicked lives, and some that consent not to be members of their Pastoral charge, should teach them all that will submit and learn: For we are called to it by the Magistrate and obliged by the publike maintenance which we receive to that end; and engaged by the general command of improving our talents, and the special opportunity that we have thereunto.

16. This teaching of all our Parishioners that will submit, must be both personally and publikely, as far as we have ability and opportunity.

opportunity. The former muſt be by Catechizing, and conference; wherein we muſt teach them firſt the eſſential points of Chriſtianity, and labour to help them to the cleareſt underſtanding of the doctrine of Salvation; and preſs it on their affections, and help them to diſcern their ſin and miſery, and do all that we can to procure their converſion or edification, according to their ſeveral ſtates; manageing the whole work with thoſe holy affections, that the weight of it doth require.

17. The great neceſſity of our neighbours, and the advantages of this familiar way, do tell us that this work of catechizing and conference is ſo great a part of our duty, that we ſhould do it with much diligence, prudence and conſtancy. And the general precepts of doing all to edification and in order, oblige us ordinarily to appoint a ſtated time and place where every family may come in order; And if we are able we ſhould go to them, that cannot or will not come to us, if they will but hear us.

18. Thoſe that are Baptized in Infancy, and there engaged to God in the holy Covenant, ſhould with all poſſible care and diligence, be educated by the Parents, or

any that have the tuition of them, in the Nurture and admonition of the Lord, and taught betimes to know the doctrine of the Gospel, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to Love God above all, and their neighbours as themselves, and to hate iniquity, and live to God, and first to seek his Kingdom and righteousness; To which end Parents should Catechize their Children, and daily be teaching them the word of God, and acquainting them with his fear and holy worship. And ministers must with special care and diligence oversee the several families of their charge, and excite the Parents to this necessary duty. And also should themselves assist them herein, and Catechize such youth (as well as all others that are Ignorant) as often as they can; especially where Parents do neglect it.

19. As Infants are by baptism admitted among the Infant-members of the Church, upon their Parents profession of Christianity, and dedicating them to God; so must they personally make a profession of their own faith, and own their baptismal Covenant, and give up themselves to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, before they are to be admitted into the number and Communion

munion of the Adult members of the Church; Which profeſſion is to be tryed and approved of by the Paſtors of the Church: And ſo excellent a duty, to be carefully, and ſeriouſly, and ſolemnly performed; that the tranſition into the ſtate and communion of the Adult, may appear to be ſo great and obſervable a thing, as may excite all to an anſwerable care and diligence, in preparation thereunto, and to look after that ſaving faith and holineſs, which they muſt ſo ſolemnly profeſs. And Miniſters ſhould have a ſpecial care, that they take nothing for a credible profeſſion, that is not ſo: and corrupt not the Church by letting in uncapable members, that muſt either be caſt out again, to the grievous exaſperating them againſt the Church and way of God, and ſo to the apparent hazzard of their ſouls: or elſe muſt live ungoverned in their wickedneſs, to the great diſhonour of God, and the provocation of his wrath againſt them and the Church.

20. For the publike worſhiping of God, and our own Edification, the Paſtors, where there is opportunity, muſt congregate the people in a ſolemn Aſſembly in a convenient place and time. And all that can

must constantly there attend, preferring the publike worship of God before the private: much more before their worldly businesses, that are not of flat necessity to themselves or others.

21. In these publike Assemblies it is lawful for us to admit, even Infidels to be present, and such Catechumen's as are yet unfit to be members of the Church, and there to teach, reprove and exhort them, and pray for them according to their state: though we may not receive them to be members of the Church, nor admit them to our special communion.

22. Because it is the holy Scriptures that containe that Gospel of which we are Ministers, and because the honour of Gods holy word is to be preserved, and the people to be instructed in it, and taught to know it; it is therefore our duty in the solemn Assemblies to read the word of God to the people, in a known tongue, (as *Moses* and the Prophets were read every Sabbath day in the Synagogues of the Jews) Such portions being chosen, and order observed, as the Pastors discern to be most for edification.

23. Our publike preaching of the Gospel

ſpel ſhould be from faith and holy experience, with plainneſs, and perſpicuity, with reverence and gravity, with convincing evidence and authority, with fervent zeal, and perſwading importunity, with the tendereſt love and melting compaſſion, with faithfulneſs, impartiality and prudence, ſuiting both matter and manner to the neceſſity of the hearers, and with frequency and unwearied patience, waiting on God for the ſucceſs.

24. The Paſtor is to lead, and the people to conſent and joyn in heart in the publike prayers, and unanimouſly to pour out their ſouls unto the Lord in penitent confeſſion of ſin, and fervent petition, and joyful thankſgiving and praiſe: and this according to the direction of the holy Scriptures, and eſpecially of the Lords prayer: which is the moſt perfect, comprehenſive ſummary, form and pattern of our prayers.

25. Confeſſion is to be made, both of our own ſin, and the ſins of the Church and Nation, of Magiſtrates, Miniſters and People: yet ſo as that we turn it not into a reproaching and diſhonouring of our ſuperiours, or an abuſing of mens perſons, by venting our malice or diſtempered paſſions,

or

or uncharitable censures against them; we must confess our original and actual sin: The great corruption of our hearts and lives: our sinful thoughts, affections, words and actions: our privative and positive sin: our omissions and commissions; our secret and unknown sins in general, and our known and open sins by name: our sins of ignorance, and sins against knowledge: our sins before and since conversion: our sins against the Lord himself, consisting in our unholiness, contrary to the first table; and our unjustice and uncharitableness against our neighbour; and our folly and injury against our selves: The sins of our relations, and of our more private life: our sins against the light and law of nature; and our sins against the Gospel and grace of a Redeemer: Against the outward means of Grace, and against the inward motions of the Spirit, and of our consciences: against mercies and judgements; against the examples of Christ and his servants, and the warning-falls of others; especially those sins by which we have most dishonoured God and our holy profession; and have most scandalized, hardened or tempted others? And all our confessions should proceed from true contrition and hatred of the sin.

26. Our

26. Our petitions must be only for things agreeable to the revealed will of God: And principally for the hallowing of his name, and the coming of his Kingdom, and the doing of his will, in earth, as it is in heaven: And therefore we must have compassionate thoughts of the dark and miserable parts of the world, where by Heathenism, Infidelity and Mahometanism, the name of God is grievously dishonoured, and his Soveraignty denied or rejected, and Satans Kingdom doth prevail; and where the will of God is partly unknown, and partly willfully disobeyed: And our eye and heart must be on the state of the universal Church, that all this interest of God-in-Christ, may be *there* preserved and advanced. And in order to these blessed ends, we must beg such necessaries of our life, as the supportation of our natures for the work of God requireth: And the forgiveness of all our sins through Christ (which yet we cannot expect to receive, if we from our hearts forgive not others:) And a gratious preservation from temptations, or the power of them, and from Satan and sin the greatest evils: That so the holiness of our hearts and lives may shew that we are the loyal subjects of the Kingdom of

our

our Lord, and that we acknowledge and magnifie his Soveraign power, and live as a people devoted to his glory. And all this we must beg in an humble sense of our great unworthiness, misery, necessity and insufficiency to help our selves; and in the name of Christ, in understanding and faith (and therefore not in a tongue that we understand not) and with fervency and unceſſant importunity, as directed, excited and strengthened by the Spirit of Christ.

27. Our thanksgiving unto God must not be like the Pharisees, in hypocrisie and pride, or to make ostentation of things that we never had, but in humility and holy joyfulness of mind, we must declare our thankfulness, for our Creation, Redemption, Justification and Reconciliation with God, our Sanctification, and all the parts thereof, and helps thereunto: For the Gospel and Ministery, and the plantation, preservation and propagation of the Church thereby: for common and special works of providence, for the good of the Church, our brethren or our selves: for mercies ordinary or extraordinary: spiritual or corporal: for prevention of evils, or removing them: for the quality and degree, the suitableness and seasonableness of all our mercies,

cies, with the reſt of their aggravations: eſpecially for thoſe that moſt promote our everlaſting happineſs, and the publike good and glory of the Lord.

28. The matter of our holy praiſes of the Lord, muſt be his bleſſed and infinite Being and Nature, and all his Attributes: his infinite Power, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs: his Truth, and Holineſs, and Love: his abſolute Dominion, his Soveraignty, and Fatherly benignity: his Juſtice and his Mercy: even as they are revealed in the works of the Creation, and in the glaſs of the holy Scripture, and in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and in the Image of God upon his Saints: And all theſe his works alſo muſt be praiſed in ſubſerviency to his praiſe. And becauſe it is a moſt high and excellent duty to praiſe the Lord, we muſt ſtrive to do it with all the faith, and reverence, and admiration, and love, and delight, and joy, and cheerfulneſs that poſſibly we can attain: and this with conſtancy as our daily work, with our eye on heaven, where we ſhall do it in perfection to all eternity.

29. As the holy Scriptures ſhould be read in a tongue that the people underſtand, ſo ſhould the pureſt exacteſt tranſlation of them be uſed that can be had: And though

though it be not of absolute necessity to the communion or peace of the Churches; yet it is to be desired and endeavoured, that all neighbour Churches that are of one language do all agree in the use of that one translation.

30. Though in cases of necessity the Gospel may be publikely expounded and applied by the reading of the Expositions and Sermons of others, yet as it is meet that the Preachers of the Gospel be able to perform this work themselves, by the abilities given them from God, in the use of just and edifying means; so it is meet that by diligent studying, meditation and prayer, these abilities be improved; and that from this holy and spiritual treasure within them, the Ministers of Christ do draw forth sound Explication, with pertinent lively Application of the truth.

31. So also in the publike prayers, though it be lawful (in it self) to read the words of prayer prescribed us by others; yet as all Ministers should be able to pray themselves from the knowledge and feeling of their own and the peoples wants, so it is meet that their graces and holy abilities be ordinarily exercised in such prayer, and that they be not restrained from speaking to God

God in such sound and meet expressions, as shall either presently, or by the means of their preparations, proceed from the sense of the matter of their prayers, excited and drawn forth by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ. But whether any particular Pastor should use a stinted form of words imposed by others, or invented by himself, or whether he shall pray without such stinted forms, or both, by turns, is a point to be determined according to his own abilities, and the state of his flock, and other accidents: but it is not to be made a matter of such necessity in it self, as to lay the unity or peace of the Churches, or the liberty of the Pastors and Worshippers of Christ upon it.

32. The *Publike Praises* of God must be expressed by the Pastor *in such words* as are produced by that holy knowledge, faith, admiration, love and delight, with which his soul should be possessed that is so nigh to God; and also by the recitation of sacred Psalms and Hymns, and by the cheerfull singing of such by the Church: wherein the melody must be spiritually, and not carnally used: for the assisting of our souls in the exercise of that holy alacrity and joy that is required in so high a work;

and

and not to draw off our minds from the matter, nor to stop at the pleasing of our ears. Such Psalms also may be recited or sung, as contain matter of confession of sin, petition, thanksgiving, and such narratives as tend to praise.

33. The form of words to be said and sung, must be taken especially out of the holy Scriptures: to which use we have the Psalms of *David* and other Hymns: And also we may use such as have been or shall be composed by wise and holy men, agreeable to the doctrine of the Scripture, and suited to the Gospel frame of worship, and as far as may be, even in Scripture phrase. And though it be not meet to insist upon a concord in lesser things, when it cannot be attained without the violation of concord in greater things; yet is it much to be desired and endeavoured that all the Churches of the same language (especially that are near and in the same dominions) should agree in using the same Psalms and Hymns for matter and meeter; and that the version so agreed on, be the best that they can have.

34. The Eucharist or Supper of the Lord is a holy Sacrament instituted by Christ, wherein bread and wine being first by consecration

secration made Sacramentally or representatively the Body and Blood of Christ, they are used by breaking and pouring out, to represent and commemorate the sacrifice of Christs Body and Blood upon the Cross, once offered up to God for sin: and are given in the name of Christ unto the Church, to signifie and solemnize the renewal of his holy Covenant with them, and sealing it unto them, and the giving of himself to them to expiate their sins by his sacrifice, and sanctifie them further by his Spirit, and confirm their right to everlasting life: and they are received, eaten and drunk by the Church, to profess that they willingly receive Christ himself to the ends aforesaid, (their Justification, Sanctification and Glorification) and to signifie and solemnize the renewal of their Covenant with him, and their holy Communion with him, and with one another.]

35. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper containeth in it these three parts. 1. The Consecration of the Bread and Wine. 2. The Representation and Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ. 3. And the giving to, and participation by the Church. The Consecration hath chief respect unto God the Father: the Representation and

Commemoration to the Son as sacrificed: and the Giving and Participation, to the applying operations of the Holy Ghost. As it must first be the Body and Blood of Christ before it be sacrificed, and first offered in sacrifice to God, before it is offered for nourishment and salvation unto men; so is it in the order of Sacramental representation.

36. The Consecration is performed by the Churches offering up the Creatures of Bread and Wine to God to be accepted to this holy use: and by Gods acceptance of them, as dedicated thereunto. The Churches dedication is expressed by the present action, and Gods acceptance is expressed by his command and promise, and the ministerial acception and benediction. The Minister in this action is the agent of the people in offering or dedicating these creatures unto God, and he is Gods Agent or Minister in receiving and blessing them.

37. In this dedication of the Bread and Wine to God to be the consecrated matter of the commemorative representative sacrifice, the Church acknowledgeth the three grand relations of God to his people. 1. We acknowledge him the Creator and Owner of all the Creatures. 2. We acknow-

knowledge him our Righteous Soveraign Ruler, whose Law we have offended, and who hath received the attonement, and whose Laws we do herein obey. And 3. We acknowledge him our Father, or bounteous benefactor, by whom we are sustained, and whose love we have forfeited, and with whom we desire by Christ to be reconciled.

38. This consecration maketh not the Bread to be no Bread, or the Wine to be no longer Wine; nor doth it make any addition to, or change upon the glorified real Body of Christ; but it maketh the Bread to be Sacramentally Christs Body; and the Wine to be Sacramentally his Blood: that is representatively: as an Actor in a Tragedy is the person whom he representeth: or as in Investitures, a sword is the honour of Knighthood, or a key is the house, or a twig or turf is the land.

39. Because Christ was to be invisible to us, and the heavens must receive him till the restoration of all things, therefore as he hath sent his Spirit within to be his Agent in his members; so hath he appointed his Ordinances without, and especially this visible solemn Representation and Commemoration of his sacrifice; that our faith

might hereby be helped, and our souls might be raised to such apprehensions of his love and the mercy of our Redemption, as if we had even seen him crucified before our eyes, and this till his glorious return, when we shall enjoy him visibly in his glory.

40. As Christ in his Intercession, as our high Priest in the heavens, procureth and conveyeth his benefits of salvation upon the account of his sacrifice once offered on the Cross; so doth the Church in this Commemoration, present him unto God the Father, as the sacrificed Lamb, in whom they profess themselves to believe, and by whom alone they expect salvation, and all the blessings tending thereunto.

41. In this Commemoration the Minister is chiefly the Agent of Christ, in representing his voluntary offering up himself unto the Father in sacrifice for sin: And he is the Agent of the people, in that part of the Commemoration, in which they profess their Believing in a crucified Christ, and thankfulness for him, and dependance on him as their hope.

42. Jesus Christ having finished the work of Redemption, which he was to do on earth, in the days of his flesh, ascended and is glorified with the Father, and being become

become the perfect head and treasure of the Church, hath in his Testament or new Covenant made a free gift of himself and life to all that will receive him as he is offered; and he hath appointed his Ministers not only to proclaim this gift unto the world, but also in his name to deliver it to the Church: And it is a great encouragement and comfort to Believers, that it is a Minister or Agent of Christ himself, that by his command, and in his name doth say to them [Take ye, eat ye, this is my Body which is broken for you.] And [this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, drink ye all of it]; Christ himself with his saving benefits, being herewith as truly offered to their faith, as the signs and representations are offered to their hands and mouths. Though it be still but (consecrated) bread and wine that doth represent, yet is it the very Body and Blood of Christ that is represented; and Christ himself as the Head of the Church, and fountain of our renewed life, and as our spiritual nourishment, that is truly given us, and received by us.

43. It is therefore unmeet for any but a lawful Minister of Christ, who is authorized hereunto, to administer this holy Sacra-

ment: both becauſe no other are called to it in the holy Scripture, nor can ſhew any warrant for ſuch an undertaking; and becauſe it is very injurious to the comfort of the Church, when they know not that the perſon hath any authority to deliver them ſo great a mercy from the Lord, nor whether Chriſt will own his miniſtration.

44. The Miniſters muſt partake of this holy Sacrament with the Church: not as they are the Agents of Chriſt for the delivery of it, but as they themſelves are his Diſciples and members of the Chruch.

45. Before the receiving of this holy Sacrament we ought to examine our ſelves, that we may come preparedly with repentance for all known ſin, and faith in Chriſt, and an humble feeling of our own neceſſities, and a thankful ſenſe of the love of God expreſſed in our redemption by Chriſt, and a hungring and thirſting after him and his righteouſneſs, and with an unfeigned love unto our brethren, and a high eſtimation of the union and communion of the Saints, and with a reſolution to walk in holy obedience to God, in patient hope of the coming of Chriſt, and of the everlaſting Kingdom, where we ſhall be perfectly in him united: which holy affections are alſo to

be

be exercised in the time of our Communion in this Sacrament, and afterwards upon the review of what we have here received and done.

46. The Word and Prayer must be joyned with the Sacrament. The nature and use of it must be opend, and the people excited to the exercise of the duties before mentioned. Sin must be confessed and lamented, and mercy implored, and thankfully acknowledged, and the goodness of God, especially manifested in the work of our Redemption, must with the greatest admiration, alacrity and joy that we can attain to, be magnified and praised, till this unspeakable love of God in Christ hath drawn out our hearts in fervent love to him again. And it will be most suitable to this Eucharistical Ordinance, that the Church do sing some Psalm or Hymn of praise to God, for the mercies of our Redemption.

47. Those are to be invited to the Supper of the Lord that have these necessary qualifications, in some degree, and the rest to be acquainted with the danger of eating and drinking unworthily. Those only are to be admitted to the Table of the Lord that have the use of reason, and can examine themselves, and are members

of the Church, and have made a personal credible profession of faith and holiness, and are not justly, for heresie or any scandalous sin, removed from present communion with the Church.

48. The using or not using of forms of prayer in the administration of this Sacrament, is to be determined of, as aforesaid in the other parts of worship, according to the different abilities of Ministers, and state of the several congregations, and other accidents that should weigh in such indifferent things. But as in the Administration of Baptism, it is ordinarily meetest and most safe, to use the express form of words which Christ hath directed us to, and the Church hath still used, *viz.* [I Baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost]: so in the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, it is safest and meetest that we use the words that Christ by his example hath directed us to use. As *Matth.* 26. 26, 27, 28. *Luk.* 22. 19, 20. 1 *Cor.* 11. 24, 25. *viz.* [Take ye, eat ye, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.] and [This is the Blood of Christ, even of the New Testament (or this is the New Testament in the Blood of Christ) which is shed

for

for many for the remiſſion of ſins; drink ye all of it in remembrance of him.]

49. As it is not unmeet for the Church at other times when they aſſemble, to make a ſolemn profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith and of holy obedience, to manifeſt their conſtancy therein; and to declare what doctrine it is that we aſſemble to profeſs, and to preſerve it in the minds of all; ſo is it more eſpecially meet, that at Baptiſm and the Lords Supper, when we are ſolemnly to renew our Covenant with the Lord, the Covenanters do renew this ſolemn Profeſſion: To which end it is moſt ſafe to make uſe of the ancient forms of Confeſſion, called, The Apoſtles Creed, and the Nicene Creed; and alſo to recite the Ten Commandments, with a profeſſion of our conſent to the terms of the Covenant with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt. To which if we (at leſt ſometimes) adjoyn ſome fuller Explication of the Creed and Decalogue (ſuch as is our Profeſſion here before ſet down) it will not be unprofitable or unmeet. And in ſuch manner it may all be managed, and ſuch ſigns or expreſſions of conſent required, as the Paſtors ſhall judge meet for the attainment of the deſired ends, with liberty for ſuch variations, as are neceſſary

necessary to prevent a dead formality.

50. At the dismission of the Assembly, it is meet that the Pastor do solemnly bless them in the name of Christ, to which he is authorized as an act of his Ministerial Office.

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51. Deacons are Church-Officers instituted by the Holy Ghost to be serviceable to the Pastors and the Church, by the distribution of the Creatures dedicated to the Church-Communion, and taking care for the supplying of the necessities of the poor, out of the contributions or stock of the Church.

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52. The first day of the week is appointed or separated by the Holy Ghost for the holy Assemblies and publike worship of the Church and other holy exercises; and is herein to be improved to the honour of God, and the edification of our selves and others: and all other imployments are therein to be avoided that any way hinder the holy duties of the day; except such as become a greater duty, upon the account of Piety, Justice or Mercy. That some stated time

time be ſeparated to the publike ſervice of God and the benefit of our ſouls, is a thing that the law of Nature doth command; that this ſtated time ſhould be at leaſt one day in ſeven, the reaſon and equity (at leaſt) of the fourth Commandment doth acquaint us: that this day ſhould be every firſt day of the week, the Holy Ghoſt in the New Teſtament hath revealed to us; acquainting us with Chriſts riſing on that day (which laid the foundation of the change) and of the Aſſembling of his Diſciples on that day, and his owning their Aſſembly by his appearing to them, and teaching them, and bleſſing them, and giving them their commiſſion and the Holy Ghoſt, *Joh.* 20. 19, to 24. The ſame they did the next firſt day, where he again appeared and owned their Aſſembly, and revealed himſelf unto them, *Joh.* 20. 26, 27. And that this was the practice of the Apoſtles and the Primitive Chriſtian Churches directed by them, appeareth *Act.* 20. 7, 8. 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2. ſo that it was called the Lords Day, as the laſt day before was called the Sabbath, *Rev.* 1. 10. And to put us out of all doubt of the matter of fact, and conſequently of the meaning of theſe texts of Scripture; the certain Tradition and moſt Concor-

Concordant history of the Church assureth us, that ever since the days of the Apostles, the universal Church in all parts of the world, hath constantly observed the Lords Day in Commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ: which it is not possible that they could have done, without contradiction and rebukes from the Apostles themselves or some of the Churches which they planted, if it had not been a certain truth. Those therefore that will be against the holy observation of the Lords Day, must either impudently deny the Testimony of all Church History and Tradition, which with one consent assure us that it was observed universally in the Christian Churches from the Apostles daies, as a thing by them established and practised; or else they must imagine that all the dispersed Churches through the world conspired in the teaching and practising of such an error without any known rebuke, wherein it had been most easie for any to have convicted them to be slanderers of the Apostles, or the Ages that were before them. Having therefore so much in Nature, in the fourth Commandment, in the New Testament, and the Doctrine and Practice of the universal Church, for our holy

holy obſervation of this day; it ill beſeems any Chriſtian to forſake all or any of theſe, and think now in the end of the world to find out the certain practice of the Apoſtles, better then all the Churches which they planted.

53. Seeing the Lords Day is purpoſely ſet apart for the celebrating of the memoriall of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and ſo of the work of our Redemption (as the Sabbath was for the Commemorating of the work of Creation), the work of the day muſt be very much Euchariſtical, and the Church ſhould be taken up in the thankful admiration of the myſterie and mercy of our Redemption, and in the affectionate praiſes of the Lord our Redeemer, and an aſpiring after the everlaſting Reſt, which he hath purchaſed, and promiſed, and prepared for us with himſelf.

54. Miniſters muſt not only perform the publike worſhip of God upon this day, but alſo exhort the people to improve the reſt of it in private, by prayer, and meditation, and holy conference, and calling to mind the Word which they have heard; eſpecially the Parents and Maſters of families, who muſt inſtruct their children and ſervants, and watch over them, and reſtrain them

them from the violation of the day, and call them to an account of the doctrine they have heard, and the duties to be performed.

55. It is lawful, and a duty on other daies also, according to our neceſſities and opportunities, to Redeem ſome time for the publike worſhip of God. And whenever the Paſtors ſhall call the Church together, to hear the Word, or perform holy worſhip, it is the peoples duty obediently and gladly to attend, if greater duties do not prohibit them.

56. When great afflictions lie upon the Church, or any uſeful members of it; or when any great ſins have been committed among them, it is meet that in publike by faſting and prayer we humble our ſelves before the Lord, for the averting of his diſpleaſure. And on ſuch occaſions it is the Paſtors duty to confeſs his own and the peoples ſins, with penitence and tenderneſs of heart, and by his doctrine and exhortation to endeavour effectually to bring the people to the ſight and ſenſe of their ſin, and the deſerts of it, and to a firm reſolution of better obedience for the time to come; being importunate with God in Prayer for pardon and renewed Grace.

57. Upon

57. Upon the receipt of any notable extraordinary mercies, the Church having opportunity, ſhould Aſſemble for publike Thankſgiving unto God: wherein the Paſtors ſhould ſtir them up to the livelyeſt ſenſe of the greatneſs of their mercies, and lead them in a joyful celebration of the praiſes of their bountiful benefactor. And it is lawful on theſe daies to expreſs our joy in feaſting and outward ſigns of mirth; provided that they be moderately and ſpiritually uſed, and not to gratifie our ſenſual deſires; and that we relieve the poor in their neceſſities (which alſo on daies of Humiliation and other ſeaſons we muſt not forget.)

58. It is not unlawful or unmeet to keep an anniverſary commemoration of ſome great and notable mercies to the Church, the memory whereof ſhould be tranſmitted to poſterity.

59. In all the modes and circumſtances of worſhip which God himſelf hath left undetermined, all Chriſtians muſt take heed of making unneceſſary things to be neceſſary, and laying the unity and peace of the Church on things indifferent, and laying ſnares for the conſciences of others; but muſt leave much to the prudence of the particular

particular Pastors that are upon the place, to whom it belongs to fit such circumstantials to their peoples state; and the Churches in such things wherein they may safely differ, must be left to their liberty: Long and sad experience having taught us, that the violent imposing of unnecessary things, is the engine of the Devil to tear the Church.

60. The marriage of Christians being a work of great concernment to themselves, and meet to be publikely performed, and accordingly to be sanctified by the Word and Prayer, it is convenient that it be solemnized by the Minister, or at least that he counsell and exhort them, and pray for a blessing on them: being first sufficiently satisfied of their capacity and necessary preparations. Herein he is to acquaint them with the Institution, Nature and Ends of their Relations; and the duties severally and joyntly by them to be performed; and the difficulties and temptations to be expected and provided for. Especially they are to be directed to live together in holiness, as the heirs of life, and to be very carefull and diligent in the holy education of their children, and governing their families for the Lord; and to use the world as not

abusing

abuſing it, remembring their approaching ſeparation by death. And he is to ſee that they ſolemnly enter into the Matrimonial Covenant, engaging themſelves to conjugal fidelity to each other, until they are ſeparated by death.

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61. The Paſtors of the Churches muſt not only Teach the people, and guide them in the publike worſhip: but alſo muſt faithfully Overſee them in private, endeavouring to know and watch over each member of their flock, preſerving them from hereſies, errours, and diviſions: defending the Truth, confuting gainſayers and ſeducers; inſtructing the Ignorant, exciting the negligent; encouraging the deſpondent; comforting the afflicted, confirming the weak, rebuking and admoniſhing the diſorderly and ſcandalous, and directing all according to their needs, in the matters of their Salvation. And the people in ſuch needs ſhould have ordinary recourſe to them, as the Officers of Chriſt, for guidance and reſolution of their doubts, and for aſſiſtance in making their Salvation ſure, and procuring, maintaining or reſtoring the peace

of their consciences, and spiritual consolation.

62. Those persons that are known to commit any gross and scandalous sin, should first by private reproof and admonition (unless where the notoriousness and heinousness of the crime doth presently call for publike reproof) be called to Repentance: And if they hear not the Reprovers, or will not Reform, the Church must be told of it: and therein it is most convenient, that the Pastors be first acquainted with the case (to avoid contention and confusion,) before it be brought into the publike assembly: And to that end it is convenient that there be stated meetings where the Pastors and some chosen members of the Church, (not as Officers, but the Deputies or Trustees of the rest) should in their several capacities take cognizance of such offences; that so a unity and full correspondence may be held between the Pastors and the flock, and all things may be done advisedly, orderly, and concordantly: but where this cannot well be done, the Pastor or Pastors must do their work without it.

63. Those persons that by more private means will not be brought to necessary Repentance

Repentance and Reformation, muſt by the Paſtor be publikely reproved and admoniſhed before the Church, and there called to Repentance by the opening of their ſin, and the judgements of the Lord, and pleading with them thoſe Goſpel mercies and motives that ſhould melt them into contrition. And if the ſucceſs do not appear, it is ordinarily meet that the Church ſhould joyn in prayer for the offender, that God would give him repentance unto life.

64. If after ſufficient waiting in the uſe of theſe means, the offendor ſtill remain impenitent, it is the duty of the Church to reject him out of their communion. Wherein the Paſtors muſt compaſſionately declare his offence and his Impenitency, and the Judgements that God hath threatned to ſuch, and the Laws of Chriſt commanding the Church to put ſuch from among them, and avoid them, and have no company with them, that they may be aſhamed, or to take them as Heathen men or Publicans: and muſt accordingly declare the perſon offending to be unmeet for Chriſtian Communion, and charge the people to avoid him, and have no fellowſhip with him, and himſelf to forbear the Communion of Chriſtians, binding him over to anſwer it at the bar of

Christ. Which sentence must be accordingly executed by the Pastors, in refusing him the Ordinances proper to the Church, and by the people in avoiding familiarity and communion with him, till he be restored upon his Repentance.

65. It must be a *credible Profession* of Repentance only that must be accepted by the Church either for the preventing of such a rejection, or for restoring the rejected. And usually when the case is heinous and notorious, or the Church hath had the publike cognizance of it, they must also have publike notice of the penitence of the offendor; who should with remorse of conscience and true contrition confess his sin before the Congregation, and heartily lament it, and crave the prayers of the Church to God for pardon and reconciliation through Christ, and also crave an Absolution by the Minister, and a restoration into the communion of the Church. But because it much dependeth on circumstances of the case whether the Confession should be publike or private, or in what manner made, it is therefore to be much left to the Prudence of the Pastors, whom the people in such cases are commanded to obey.

66. When a credible Profession of Repentance

pentance is made (whether voluntarily by the Converted, or upon the Churches admonition by the ſcandalous, or after excommunication) it is the duty of the Paſtors to declare ſuch Penitents in the name of Chriſt to be pardoned and abſolved, and Miniſterially to give them this Mercy from the Lord, in caſe their Repentance be ſintere as they profeſs: And if the perſon were excommunicate, it is the duty of the Paſtor to declare him again meet for the Communion of the Church, and require the Church to receive him with joy as a returning ſinner, and not to reproach him with his falls, but to forgive him, as Chriſt forgiveth him; all which they are accordingly to perform; and the Penitent with Joy to receive his abſolution, and to return to the Communion of the Church, and to a more holy careful obedient life.

67. When any by frequent Covenant-breaking, have forfeited the Credit of their words, the Church muſt have teſtimony of the *actual Reformation* of ſuch perſons, before they can receive their profeſſions and promiſes as credible any more. Though yet there is ſo great difference here in perſons and offences, that the particular caſes muſt be much left to the prudence of the

Pastors that are present, and know the persons and the whole case.

68. So great is the necessity of the sick, and so seasonable and advantagious the opportunity, that Ministers should not negligently omit them, but in Love and tenderness instruct them, according to their several conditions: endeavouring the Conversion of the ungodly, and the strengthening of the weak, and comforting such as need Consolation; directing them how to improve their affliction; and helping them to be truly sensible of the evil of sin, the miscarriages and negligences of their lives; the vanity of the world; the necessity and sufficiency of Christ, and the certainty and excellency of the everlasting Glory: Perswading them to a pious, just and charitable disposal of their worldly estate; and to forgive such as have wronged them, and to be reconciled to those with whom they have been at variance; and believingly to hope for that life with Christ, which he hath promised to all that are sanctified by his Spirit, and comfortably to commit their souls to their Redeemer, and quietly rest in the Will, and Love, and Promises of God; Resolving if God should recover them to health, to Redeem their time, and live as a people devoted

voted to his Glory. It is meet also that the Pastors pray for the sick, both privately and publikely when it is desired and thought fit.

69. The Burial of Christians should be decent and honourable, and though it be a thing indifferent in it self, whether Exhortations, Funeral Sermons or Prayers be then used, yet because the season is very advantagious for mens reception of holy instructions, it is convenient (at least when desired) that the Minister do take that season as often as he can, to mind people of their mortality, and the necessity of a speedy preparation for their change: so prudently managing all his Exhortations and Prayers, that the due end may be attained, and the abuse prevented as far as may be.

70. The lives of Christs Ministers should be conformable to their holy doctrine: and so exemplary in Innocency, Love, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Contempt of the world, crucifying the desires of the flesh, and in a zealous heavenly conversation, and in all works of Piety, Justice and Charity, within their power, that the mouths of the enemies may be stopped, and the people may learn, and be convinced and directed, even by

their holy examples, and our selves may be saved, and the Christian Church and doctrine may be honoured, to the glory of the Holy Ghost and of our Redeemer, and our heavenly Father.

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71. As we have all one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Faith, and Hope, and Love, one Covenant, and one Catholike Church, so should the Communion of Saints extend as far as their capacity and opportunities will allow. And as particular persons must Associate for personal Communion in publike worship, so particular Churches should associate for such Brotherly correspondency and communion, as they are capable of, and their needs require; That by communicating the Truths and Mercies which they have received, and advising together, and by a brotherly collation of their apprehensions, and improvement of their several gifts, the unity of the Churches may be preserved, and discords and uncharitableness may be avoided, and the beauty and strength of the Churches maintained. And therefore the Pastors of the neighbour Churches (not excluding others that are fit) should meet as frequently, and at such times

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and places, as the ends and works of the Aſſociation do require.

72. Into theſe Aſſociations ſuch Paſtors and Churches ſhould be received that make a credible Profeſſion of Faith and Holineſs, and no other: And they that are Hereticks, or of ſcandalous ungodly lives, muſt after a firſt and ſecond admonition, if they remain impenitent, be rejected and diſowned by the Faithful Paſtors and Churches.

73. Where the fixing of a ſtated Preſident in each of theſe Aſſociations is requiſite for the peace and edification of the Brethren, it may well be yielded to: but however a ſpecial care muſt be had to prevent contentions and diviſions: and therefore perverſe diſputings muſt be ſuppreſſed; and proud, ſelf-conceited, domineering perſons, and ſuch as are of fiery, turbulent, contentious ſpirits, and alſo ſubtile hereticks and dividers, muſt be watched againſt as the plague of the Churches, and all poſſible charity, humility, meekneſs, ſelf-denyal, and zeal for holy concord, muſt be exerciſed.

74. Thoſe that through diſtance or impediments cannot, or through miſtakes or peeviſhneſs will not joyn in ſuch ſtated bro-

therly

therly Associations and Assemblies, are yet to be allowed the due estimation and affection of Brethren, and so much Communion as at a distance they are capable of, if they do but agree with us in a sound profession of the faith, and a holy conversation, and Ministerial fidelity in the main: but yet we must disown the sin of their dividing, or neglect, and as we have opportunity testifie against it.

75. These Churches that cannot hold local Communion with one another through differences that destroy not the Essentials of Christianity, should yet maintain a dear and tender Christian Love to one another, and profess their owning each other as Christians, and Churches of Jesus Christ, and should agree together upon certain just and equal Rules for the management of their unavoidable differences, so as may least prejudice charity and common good, and least harden the ungodly, or grieve the weak, or dishonour God, or hinder the success of Common, great and necessary Truths upon the souls of men; contriving and amicably promoting the Cause of Christianity, and every part of it, in which they are agreed; and should open their disagreements to the people as little as they can.

76. In

76. In cases of tolerable difference, as Ministers and People must maintain a special holy Love, and Communion as far as their differences will admit; so must they desire the well-fare and the Peace of one another, and not stir up hatred or persecution, against each other, by odious nick-names, or exasperating the Magistrate or people against dissenters; but should consent to the Liberty of each other, and help to take off unjust hatred, and to hinder all unmerciful violence or rigor against one another. And all of us should watch against and abhor that proud, self-conceited, domineering disposition that would make us censorious, malicious, or cruel against the weakest servants of the Lord.

77. Yet must we not under pretence of Charity, consent to any such noxious Liberty, as plainly tendeth to the wrong of the Church, and the poysoning of the souls of others; nor yet must we consent to the errours of the best. Though we are not the judges of the secrets of mens hearts, nor may not deal uncharitably with any, yet must not heretical self-conceited persons be tolerated in the obstinate dispersing of their errours, to the destruction or danger of mens souls, nor to reproach and speak against

against the weighty necessary truths of God: Nor should any be tolerated to kindle the flames of uncharitableness and contentions in the Churches, by railing, reproachful language against the tolerable dissenters: But a healing, merciful, and profitable, and not a destructive Toleration should be promoted.

78. The Pastors of the Churches of Christ have the power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, but not of the Temporal sword on earth: And though we determine not whether in cases of Necessity, it be lawful for Pastors to be also Magistrates; yet it is certain that without Necessity it should not be allowed (their work requiring all their time and strength) and that as Pastors it belongeth not to them; But as the Magistrate is the appointed officer of God, to Govern even Churches, Pastors, and People, in the way of outward force, and Pastors are his Officers to govern them by Spiritual Conduct; so must we be so far from desiring to usurp a secular power, that we should still advise the Magistrate to keep the sword in his own hand, and to take heed of putting compulsive power in the hands of Pastors, or enabling them to execute their passionate displeasure against their brethren:

thren, And as the Magistrate must not usurp the Pastors office, but only see that we perform it our selves, and punish us if we do not, so must not the Pastors usurp the Magistrates office, but humbly and modestly teach and advise him from the word of God, and reprove him, and threaten him, and in cases of extremity denounce the Wrath of God against him, and bind him over to the Tribunal of Heaven, to answer for his obstinate impenitent contempt; and then leave all the matter to that bar, and patiently suffer if we be persecuted by him; Not doing any thing in the management of any of our work, without a due respect and reverence to his Authority, and a care of the common good that dependeth on his honour, but remembring what is meet for him to hear, and for us as Messengers of Christ to speak.

79. Those Churches of several Nations that through distance and diversity of secular Governours, are uncapable of personal or local Communion with others, should yet consent as neer as may be in their holy professions, and practises; not tying each other to any of their unnecessary modes or forms, nor uncharitably censuring any tolerable dissenters, but owning those Churches that agree with them in the great

and

and necessary things, & holding such correspondence with them by Messengers, as shall be needful to the promoting of their Unity, Love and Peace, and of the Gospel and common cause of Christ, and the defence of each other against the common enemies of those, as emergent occasions shall require and direct them.

80. To the aforesaid uses, the Councils or Synods of Pastors are lawful and convenient in cases that require them, where the Pastors of several Churches and Nations may diliberate and determine in order to their Unity, of Doctrines and Practices to be Agreed in, and may strengthen the hands of one another. But yet, the Canons of such Councils are rather Agreements, then proper Laws, to their several members or absent Brethren; and bind in order to Unity and Concord by vertue of those General Commands that require us to do the work of God in such Unity and Concord, and not by vertue of any proper superior Regimental power, which that Council hath over the particular Bishops of the Churches of Christ. And as for General Councils, as we should to the forementioned ends regard and honour them above all other, if really such were lawfully assembled; so in this enlarged

enlarged and diſperſed ſtate of the Militant Church, we may eaſily ſee, that full and proper Univerſal Councils, are neither the Stated Governors of the Univerſal Church, nor neceſſary to its well-being, no nor Lawful to be attempted, as a Courſe that would certainly deſtroy or grievouſly wrong the Churches, by the death and long abſence of the Paſtors, through ſo many hundred and thouſand miles travail, and ſo long attending, which the ſtate and work of proper Univerſal Councils will require: Yea the ſaid diſtance, with the age and weakneſs of the Paſtors, and the different languages, and the poverty of many diſabling them from ſuch tedious voyages and journies, and the diſſent of the Princes, (many of them Heathens, Infidels, Mahometans) under whoſe Government they live, or through whoſe dominions they muſt paſs, theſe with many the like Impediments do make a true Univerſal Councill (like an Univerſal Parliament or Senate) to be ſo far from neceſſary, or deſirable, as to be Morally Impoſſible, or next to Impoſſible, as to the very Being of it.

The way that God hath appointed for Church-Government and deciding controverſies, is, 1. That Princes and Magiſtrates govern

govern by the ſword or force, and judge who are fit to be Puniſhed by the ſword. (And though moſt Princes on the earth by Infidelity have made themſelves uncapable of this part of the work of their Office, yet cannot that diſoblige them from the Commands of God, or free them from his puniſhments for not performing them, nor make the Office of Magiſtrates another thing, nor diſable Chriſtian Princes and Magiſtrates, or diſoblige them who have not made themſelves uncapable.) 2. That theſe Princes and Governors of ſeveral Nations, do hold a Loving Chriſtian Correſpondency, for the management of their affairs, and Government of the Churches under them, ſo as may be moſt to the advantage of the Cauſe of Chriſt, and the union, ſtrength and defence of Chriſtians; (The General Rules, and Ends of their Truſt and Power, do oblige them to hold ſuch Aſſemblies by their Meſſengers as are needful for their Agreement and the Unity and Safety of the Churches under them, as well as they oblige Paſtors to ſuch neceſſary correſpondencies.) 3. That the Paſtors of particular Churches be the Governors of thoſe Churches by the word and holy Diſcipline (not having the power of the ſword or violence)

and

and that they Judge who is fit or unfit for Communion with that Church which each or any of them over-see, and who is to be thence Excommunicated, or there Absolved. 4. That these Bishops, Pastors, or Elders of particular Churches, should hold Communion among themselves with all their Brethren of other Churches, as far as their natural capacity will allow, and the need or benefit of the Churches require it: and that they handle in common the causes that belong to all in common, and settle and maintain Agreements for the Unity and Communion of the Churches: And they are Judges (as Associate) who is to be received into their Associate Communion; and who to be excluded from it; and what Pastors or Churches they should hold such Communion with as they are capable of; and which they should admonish, or renounce. 5. The Christian people have allowed them a Judgement of Discretion; by which they must prove all things, and hold fast that which is good: and must discern and obey the Lawfull commands and directions of their Magistrates and Pastors. 6. And as Men have thus their several shares alloted them in Government, Judgement, and decisions, limitedly, and not Absolutely Judging, even

to the Execution which belongs to their several Judicatures: So the Finall Absolute Judgement, and Decision of all Controversies and Causes, is reserved to the dreadfull Tribunal of the Lord, to which we may make our last Appeal, where all the world shall be judged in Righteousness, and all the Judgements of men be themselves Judged, and Truth and Error, Good and Evil, Right and Wrong will be more perfectly manifested unto all, and it shall be irreversibly determined by Jesus Christ, who shall go into Life Everlasting, and who to everlasting punishment.

Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly.

Novemb. 16. 1658.

THE *Author thought it not unfit here to annex the* Description *of that* Order *and* Discipline *which is exercised by* him, *with his Assistant fellow-Pastors, in the* Parish-Church of Kederminster; *in Association with many Pastors of those parts, who have Agreed to exercise so much of the Ministerial Office, as by the Consent of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational, belongeth to them. Which being published, 1. May prevent mens injurious mis-reports of our Associations, and Discipline, which they may be drawn to by fallacious fame. 2. And may be an example for those Churches that by the Magistrates are left at liberty, to worship God in that Communion and Order which they judge most agreeable to the Word of God, and the Universal Consent and Practice of the Primitive Church.*

The Order and Discipline of this Church, agreeable to the Word of God.

I. WE are willing to Teach all in our *Parish*, the doctrine of Life, that are willing to learn: And desire them all to hear the Word publikely preached, and to come to us to be Catechized or Instructed.

II. We own all those as visible Christians

and members of the Universal Church, that make a credible Profession of Christianity, and destroy it not by Heresie, or ungodly lives.

III. So many of these as also Consent to hold Communion with this Church as members of it, submitting to the Ministers and Discipline of Christ, we shall esteem our flock and special charge, and faithfully perform the duties of our Office for their good, as we are able.

IV. We desire that all the *Youth of the Parish* will learn *the principles of the Christian Religion*: and as soon as they *understand* it, and *are heartily resolved to give up themselves to God in Christ through the Spirit*, and to lead a holy life, that they will come and acquaint us with their *Faith* and *Resolution*; and before the Church will make a solemn Profession thereof, and *give up themselves to God in the personal owning their Baptismal Covenant*; either reciting the fore-going Creed or Profession, or, if they are unfit for publike speaking, by *Consenting* when *we* propound it *to them*; or by any other fit expressions. That so we may publikely pray for their confirmation;

tion; and if they Consent also to hold Communion with this Church, we may know them as our Charge, and Regiſter their names.

V. Thoſe Pariſhoners that deſire us to Baptize their children, or to be themſelves admitted to the Lords Supper, and are not members of this Church, (becauſe they will not), we deſire to come to us, ſome dayes before; that ſo we may be ſatisfied of their *Faith* and *Life*: And if they *ſeem true Chriſtians*, and either bring a Certificate that they are members of *any other Church*, with which we are to hold Communion, *or* ſhew that it is not *from ungodlineſs* that they refuſe to live under Order and Diſcipline, we ſhall Baptize their children, and occaſionally admit them to our Communion. But if they *are ſcandalous*, we ſhall require them *firſt* to Profeſs their *ſerious Repentance*: And if they *relapſe to ſcandal*, we ſhall after ſtay till we ſee their Reformation (or of one of the parents in caſe of Baptiſm.)

VI. If any member of this Church do differ from us about the *geſture* in the *Lords Supper* (or *any ſuch Circumſtance*) we de-

sire them first to come to us, and hear our Reasons: and if we cannot satisfie them, we will not hinder them from receiving it in any decent gesture they desire.

VII. All members of the Church must ordinarily hold Communion with it, in the Lords Supper and all Ordinances: and if a Brother grosly offend, they must orderly and prudently admonish him; and if he hear them not, tell the Church.

VIII. Once a Moneth we have a meeting of the Magistrates, Ministers, Deacons, and above twenty persons chosen annually by the Church, as their Trustees or Deputies: Here the offendours must be accused, and heard, and dealt with, before the case be opened in the Church. And any that are justly offended with any member, may have Church-Justice. (The Magistrates presence being only *ad melius esse*) and the chosen Trustees or Deputies being no Ecclesiastical Officers, nor pretending to Divine Institution as such: but only the fittest of the people chosen to do those things which belong to the people (who cannot all so frequently meet) and having no authoritative ruling Votes.

IX. Those

IX. Those that Repent not upon publike *Admonition*, must be cast out of our Communion, and avoided as Heathens: But those that are Penitent, must be Absolved, and lovingly received.

X. If any of our People be offended at any thing in our Doctrine or Life, we desire them before they vent their offence behind our backs, to come and lovingly tell it us, and hear us speak. And if we do not satisfie them, we desire them to open the matter before the Ministers of this Association, who are here Assembled every Moneth. And we shall before them, be responsible, for our Doctrine, our Administrations, and our Lives. (As we are also willing to be to the Magistrate, who only hath the power of the sword, even over the Pastors of the Church, and whom in all things Lawful we must obey, and not resist.)

FINIS.

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